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Moral and Religious Cabinet.

"To aid the cause of Virtue and Religion."

Vol. I.

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No. 9.

MEMOIR OF MR. THOMAS COOK.

WRITTEN BY S. BRACKENBURY.

MR. THOMAS COOK was born at Loughborough in the year 1734, and lived more than thirty years without God in the world, having attained to a horrid pre-eminence in wickedness. With what unfeigned regret did he always lament (to use his own expression) his "long continued course of rebellion." When he spoke of it, a pensive sadness used to shade his countenance, and his voice assumed a tone of softened sorrow, perfectly in unison with a heart that mourns for its aggravated crimes. On every recollection of his former state of ignorance and alienation from God, he wept softly in the bitterness of his soul. About the year 1766, he was induced to hear the Methodist Preachers on their first going to Loughborough, when the word of God was quick and powerful,—instantly seized him as its victim, and so effectually wrought in him, that he conferred not with flesh and blood: the convincing evidence of truth burst upon his soul with a flood of light, which continued to shine with undeclining brightness, and unabating warmth, till this plant of grace was nurtured and matured for the Paradise of GOD.

On his first entrance on the narrow path he gave a promising earnest of his future attainments. It was then evident that he would not be a christian by halves. He set out as though he had designed himself a comment on those words, *the last shall be first*, for such in reality was the blessed result. He soon outstripped his companions and "held on the even tenor of his way," faithfully following the light which God imparted to him. He did not stop to reason, he did not delay through fear, but uniformly acted with

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magnanimous courage, accounting a cowardly Christian a contradiction in terms. To this foundation were brought admirable materials for raising a stately edifice ; *gold, silver, and precious stones* ; every grace of the Spirit and all the fruits of holiness.

In the depth of humble penitence, the course of self-denial and mortification, on which he entered, was very severe. For three months he took but little nourishment except barley bread and water ; and when he abated a little of that strictness, he still carried his abstemiousness so far, that his knees frequently smote together as he walked ; often fasting whole days and praying whole nights. He always wore the coarsest apparel ; and during a very severe winter, at a time when his health was extremely delicate, I could not prevail upon him to wear a great coat. Having one day urged it more strenuously than before, he replied, with much sweetness, " when you can assure me there is not a poor man destitute of *one* coat, I may then, perhaps, wear *two*." He was an uniform Christian, he took his religion into the minutiae of his deportment. I am unwilling to pass by the smallest expression of it, yet it is impossible to do him justice here, but by saying, in him,

" 'Twas nature all, and all delight."

No restraint was deemed hard, no cross heavy, no burden grievous, for to a faith like his, *all things were possible*. But whilst he was thus austere and rigid to himself, he was always compassionate and forbearing to others. On his tongue was the law of kindness, his speech distilled as the dew, as the small rain (delicate and gentle) upon the tender herb, (feeble afflicted souls.) Himself always *light in the Lord*, he feelingly deplored the blindness and obstinacy of others, which he faithfully reprov'd by the most winning and commiserating address, and the mildest expostulations. Such love only could produce such sorrow as he felt, when any turned away, refusing instruction, perversely straying in the paths of error : full of the most tender charity, he used to say,

"Hast thou a lamb in all thy flock,
I would disdain to feed?
Hast thou a foe before whose face
I'd fear thy cause to plead?"

Perhaps the most prominent feature in the character of this holy man, was *divine simplicity*; no disguise ever marred, no guile ever tarnished his conduct: the purity of his life was a sweet transcript of the purity of his heart; and walking, as he always did, in the presence of the Lord, favoured with near and intimate fellowship with the Father of spirits, and luminous views of the divine glory, it were superfluous to say that humility was not the least conspicuous trait in his religion, agreeable to that indisputable axiom,

"I loathe myself when God I see."

Though his humility was visible on all occasions, it never failed to express itself most significantly by his placing himself at the feet of the meanest saint. He knew what it was to be least and servant of all, and here he shone, I might almost say, with unrivalled lustre; he rejoiced in performing the most menial and servile offices, such as many pusillanimous Christians would blush to mention. But his peculiar delight was to minister to the sick. Where was the abode of poverty and affliction in Loughborough that he did not resort to, as "an angel sent on errands full of love?" How often did the keen upbraidings of guilt and remorse give place to humble confidence, when his suasive voice was heard! How often did death change its terrific aspect into the smiles of peace, through his unceasing efforts to reclaim and comfort! He was admirably calculated to administer balm to the wounded, and cordials to the fainting mind of the awakened sinner, by a disposition moulded into the softest form that sympathy ever wore. Herein he joined issue with heaven itself, that seat of pure benevolence: What sweet accordance, what near resemblance, what close alliance betwixt a good man and an angel! To relieve bodily pain, to enrich the deepest poverty, deserves not the name of benevolence, compared to that of consoling the

afflicted mind ; for a man may sustain his infirmities, when it is emphatically asked, "A WOUNDED SPIRIT WHO CAN BEAR?" And though this office in the gospel of peace is more strictly appropriated to the Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, to whose *work of faith* is beautifully added the *labour of love* ; yet as God called Mr. Cook to this work in an unusual manner, he afforded him correspondent success. He has told me, that frequently when he has been most engaged in prayer for his sick flock, that God has vouchsafed to direct him to go to such a house or family, as distinctly as the Lord told Annias to go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, (Acts ix. 11.) And that in going after such intimations the result was always satisfactory. And here such acts of mercy, and such indefatigable labours of love present themselves to my remembrance, that I feel how inadequate I am to a full representation of so exalted a Christian. Let then the succinct, but comprehensive saying serve as an exact portrait of him, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord."

As a Leader of the Class he directly aimed at the edification of his people, and his word was as marrow and fatness to our souls. To those who had passed the vail of outward things, it was evident that Mr. Cook had entered into the holy of holies, to which one cannot so properly say he had access, as that he abode there: it was to him his permanent resting place, from which he never came out. It was his constant practice to make a short and solemn pause previous to his speaking to each individual in his class, when we all felt for ourselves the impression of his devout appeal to heaven for a discovery of our respective wants, attainments, or declensions ; and such was our confidence in him, that we used all possible simplicity and frankness in the accustomed avowal of our sentiments, our progress, or our failures ; for whilst he was jealous over us with godly jealousy, he was gentle, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. His very rebukes were as precious balm: and here, if it would not appear invidious, I should be induced to

contrast his reverential, filial manner of approaching the Deity with that vociferous, indecorous method "of caressing equality," which some novel converts have adopted to the reproach of Christianity.

He was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; yet he knew what it was to be baptized into the cloud, and into the sea. He had fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, and filled up (his proportion) of the afflictions of Christ for the body's sake, the Church. He entered into the kingdom of heaven through many tribulations: but it may be said of him, as of the Captain of his salvation, "he learned obedience by the things which he suffered;" so that his heart seemed incapable of any other language than, "Father, thy will be done." I have heard him say, that for several weeks together this has been his whole prayer in secret. He often laboured to let me see into the vast meaning contained in those words. He would say, that prayer answered, brings all possible glory to God, and all possible happiness to man. With what sweet submission of spirit have I heard him say, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?" He had but one desire, one choice, one aim, that it might truly be said of him, it was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father. Love was the main spring which so powerfully impelled him to a ready acquiescence in the good pleasure of God, and on all occasions so victoriously triumphed over the opposition of nature. This principle put every wheel in motion; all moved harmoniously; all was unison. No eccentric deviations were ever known to impede his progress; he went from strength to strength, or to use his own words, (a favourite expression) he walked "at liberty." He knew not what it was to be in bondage to any person or thing, so that at all times you might discern in him an ease peculiar to independence, and a holy freedom without any mixture of restraint. He sought not the honour that cometh of men; his religion was formed after another model. He knew what it was to be crucified with Christ, *always bearing in his body the dying of the Lord*

Jesus. His language, on many occasions, resembled that of Ignatius, who said, "My Love is crucified, and there is not any fire within me that loves matter but *living* and speaking *water*, saying within me, 'Come to the Father.' I take no pleasure in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life, I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, and the drink I long for is his blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life."

But of his faith, what shall I say? It meets me at every turn and in all directions; it not only gave him victory over the world, but wrought in him such an abstractness from all outward things, that he used to move from place to place regardless of external objects, wholly intent on heaven, his eternal home, where by faith he saw a mansion of resplendent glory prepared for his reception. Of this only was he ambitious, and now his highest wish is crowned, and all his trials, difficulties, and persecutions, (which I forbear to enumerate, for they were many and some of them very near) are forgotten, as a fleeting form which deludes the fancy at midnight; or if remembered, it is but to raise his song of triumph higher, as he was thereby advanced nearer to his Saviour's throne. But there is one instance of his faith which I cannot omit, respecting the conversion of his family, (for he had several children) wherein he *hoped against hope*, being always confident that God would shew them his salvation; and one striking proof was afforded him, that his expectations should not be cut off. An only daughter who had not been married above four years, in all the vigour of youth, and bloom of health was suddenly snatched away by death. Her pious father offered one continued prayer to God in her behalf; but the first day of her affliction his admonitions seemed lost upon her, and she declined his praying with her. But was he, on this account, the less solicitous for her safety? No: he renewed his earnest applications to God, if incessant prayers may be said to be renewed, when, on the second day, a messenger came to request him to hasten to his daughter. Did he instantly obey the summons of his dying child? No: he first fell prostrate before

the Lord, bathed in tears of joy and gratitude for the blessed change wrought in her mind, though as yet he had no verbal testimony of it: but God gave him an answer to his prayer, and an assurance above all verbal or ocular demonstration. After giving vent to the full tide of transport which had filled his holy and devout spirit, he repaired to his daughter's house, and on entering her room, she said, "O Father, your prayers will do me good now." He wept long in silence, and then with all the lively affection and deep interest of a Father, implored his God to be the God of his child: but it is impossible to do justice to the tender and moving scene that ensued. Silence on an occasion so touching and so solemn is more emphatic than the most eloquent words. The day following she closed her eyes in peace, aged 24, and was taken to her father's God. And now they re-embrace in ecstasies unknown before. He greets again his only well-beloved Anne, so changed from glory into glory, with such improved charms and added beauty, that even a father's tender partiality can but just recognize her as his own: the child of his faith—child of his prayers.

I cannot close my little narrative of this holy man without taking notice of that awfulsense which he entertained of the Majesty of God, so that when he has been engaged in reading, and met with any of the Names of God, no sooner did his eye glance upon them, than he was overwhelmed, and revering the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

" He breath'd unutterable praise,
And rapturous awe, and silent love."

And whenever he was going to mention the Name of God, you might perceive his spirit instantly assume the posture of humble adoration: indeed his whole conversation seemed but one act of devotion. Whatever company he came into (though he was all affability) he brought with him such a savour of grace, that every frivolous remark was instantly suppressed, and unprofitable conversation dismissed. He never spent time on observations about

the weather : he left all that chit-chat to the vacant mind of the thoughtless, while he strove to turn the whole attention of every one towards God.

“ Jesus all the day long
Was his joy and his song.”

Whenever he met me in the street, his salutations used to be, “ Have you free and lively intercourse with God to day? Are you giving your whole heart to God?” I have known him on such occasions speak in so pertinent a manner, that I have been astonished at his knowledge of my state. Meeting me one morning, he said, “ I have been praying for you, you have had a sore conflict ; though all is well now.” At another time he asked, “ Have you been much exercised these few days, for I have been led to pray that you might especially have suffering grace.” Had I previously given him a full statement of my feelings at those seasons he could not have formed a more intimate and correct idea of them. So true is it, that “ he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”

But while he exercised this care towards individuals, the peace and prosperity of the church militant was his first concern. O how tenderly and how confidently did he repeat, “ If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning : if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : if I do not prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy ! ” Nor could his heart feel a deeper wound than on perceiving or hearing of the defection of any from the truth. He mourned over them, “ as one mourneth for his only son, and was in bitterness for them, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.” An instance of this sort recurs to my recollection concerning a young lady, who, after having made considerable progress in the divine life, unhappily departed from the holy commandment delivered to her, for whom he lamented in the inimitable language of the Prophet, “ How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion in his anger, and cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of

Israel!" But after a pause, in which his spirit appeared deeply labouring with what words wanted power to explain, he said, in a manner I cannot forget,

" All are not lost or wander'd back,
All have not left thy Church and Thee :
There are who suffer for thy sake,
Enjoy thy glorious infamy,
Esteem the scandal of the cross,
And only seek divine applause."

He once told me he had not conversed with any person for ten years for whom he had not prayed. Indeed it would have been difficult to have found him at any moment in which his soul was not ascending to God in ardent prayer or lively praise. There was such a sweet mixture of these in the whole of his conversation, that it was evident all his thoughts had rest in heaven : and I know there were seasons, when he was so let into the visions of God, that he has even forgot our hours of public prayer, and the times of preaching ; and when he has come down from the mount, he has not seemed conscious of the length of time elapsed ; but " hours speed away when the delighted ear feeds on the converse of a friend we love."

And now it only remains for " death to make the sacrifice complete." In the beginning of 1804, the outward man visibly declined, though the inner man was renewed day by day ; for as the captive exile hastens to be loosed, or, as the " hireling looks with long expecting eyes to see the shadows rise, and to be at rest ;" so his soul was on the wing *to be ever with the Lord.*

" Full of immortal hope,
He urg'd the restless strife,
And hasten'd to be swallow'd up
Of Everlasting Life."

But as entire conformity to his Living Head had been his motto in life, behold him at the close of it treading in his Lord's steps!

He is called to enter into his Saviour's agony. About the middle of April his bodily afflictions began to increase, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, having a share in that last mysterious passion of his Lord. Amazed and shuddering at the dreadful cup, he meekly bowed to kiss the hand that administered it, and to bathe it with the blended tears of sorrow and love, still praying, "Father, thy will be done." But see him again emerge! The hour of sore dismay and darkness past—fought the fight—the victory won; nothing now remained but the actual and full realization of his favourite hymns, (67th and 70th) which he used to sing more frequently than any other. His countenance was wont to glow with inexpressible sweetness when repeating the third verse of the 70th hymn:

"Write upon me the name divine;
And let thy Father's nature shine,
His image visibly exprest,
His glory pouring from my breast,
O'er all my bright humanity,
Transform'd into the God I see!"

At the close of that last severe conflict just recited, it might be said, his *warfare was accomplished*: for the last five or six weeks he was preserved in a state of unruffled composure,—uninterrupted patience, and—total resignation. His bodily sufferings were increasingly severe, and of the most painful nature to the last moments of his mortal life.

I was informed by a friend who frequently visited him, that at one time he asked him, If that God whom he had so long served was now his support? To which Mr. Cook answered: "O yes, it cannot be otherwise: it cannot be that my God should now forsake me; he is bound to me by a thousand indissoluble ties." He then desired brother R—— to give his love to the society, and charged him with his love to some backsliders, whom he mentioned by name, and to whom he sent that encouraging message, "Tell them from me God is still merciful."

One day his wife asked him, if he had any particular text on his mind from which a funeral sermon might be preached; He answered: "O no! No funeral sermon for *me*." That reply undoubtedly originated in a deep self-abborence. Commendation was an aliment for which he had no relish; human applause an ignis-fatuus incapable of attracting his slightest notice.

Brother R—— observes: "The last time I visited him, he was unable to speak; yet in the same heavenly frame of mind, requesting, by signs, that brother L—— and myself would pray; when he took an affectionate farewell of us by pressing our hands. In a few hours after, June 16, 1804, his happy spirit left this vale of tears, to behold the face of that Jesus whom he loved, and by virtue of whose precious blood he so nobly triumphed over death and the grave."

The same friend farther remarked of Mr. Cook: "The meekness of his spirit was visible upon all occasions; there was no such thing as provoking him to the least degree of revenge; he endured the bitterest words, and the most cruel treatment, with all that placidity which so eminently dignified his blessed Master. All ranks and degrees of people spoke of him as a good man." Mr. Lockwood added the following testimony: "For more than thirty years we took sweet counsel together, and with pleasure walked to the house of God as friends. My soul embraced him as *an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile*."

[*London Methodist Magazine*,

THE FATAL MISTAKE.

IT is the Christian name, and the profession of something called Christianity, by which numbers are deceived. Many imagine, because they were born in a country denominated christian, and educated in the doctrines of Christ, they are, of course, real Christians: but nothing is farther from the truth. To be a Christian in this sense, which is popular and fashionable, is neither difficult

nor excellent. It is to be baptized, to profess the christian religion, to believe, like our neighbor, that Christ is the Messiah ; to attend public worship on Sunday. In this sense, a man may be a christian, and yet habitually careless about eternal things ; a christian, and yet fall short of the morality of many of the heathens : a christian and yet a drunkard, a swearer or a slave to some vice or other : a christian, and yet a wilful impenitent offender against God and man !

A beggar that fancies himself a king, and trails his rags with the gait of majesty as though they were real robes, is not so ridiculous as one that usurps the christian name without a christian practice. It is reported that Alexander had a soldier in his army of his own name, but a mere coward. Either be like me, says the general, or lay aside my name. And it has been said by a greater than Alexander, If ye love me, keep my commandments: herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. But he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is equally preposterous with the man that shall ridicule learning, and yet glory in the character of a scholar ; or with him that shall laugh at bravery, and yet celebrate the praises of heroes.

HEAVEN.

THE rose is sweet but it is surrounded with thorns, the lilly of the valley is fragrant, but it springs up among the brambles. The spring is pleasant, but it is soon past : the summer is bright but the winter destroys its beauty. The rainbow is very glorious, but it soon vanishes away ; life is good, but is soon swallowed up in death.

There is a land where the roses are without thorns, where the flowers are not mixed with brambles. In that land there is eternal spring, and light without any cloud. The tree of life grows in the midst thereof ; rivers of pleasure are there, and flowers that

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never fade. Myriads of happy spirits are there, and surround the throne of GOD with a perpetual hymn. The angels with their golden harps sing praises continually, and the cherubims fly on wings of fire!—This country is Heaven: it is the country of those that are good: and nothing that is wicked must inhabit there. The toad must not spit its venom amongst turtle doves; nor the poisonous henbane grow amongst sweet flowers. Neither must any one that does ill enter into that good land.

This earth is pleasant, for it is God's earth, and it is filled with many delightful things. But that country is far better: there we shall not grieve any more; there the cold of winter shall not wither us, nor the heats of summer scorch us. In that country there are no wars nor quarrels, but all love one another with dear love.

When our parents and friends die, and are laid in the cold ground, we see them here no more; but there shall we embrace them, and live with them, and be separated no more. There shall we meet all good men whom we read of in holy books. There shall we see Abraham the father of the faithful; and Moses after his long wanderings in the Arabian desert; and Elijah, the prophet of God; Daniel who escaped the lion's den; and there the son of Jesse, the Shepherd king, the sweet singer of Israel. They loved God on earth: they praised him on earth; but in that country they will praise him better and love him more.

There we shall see Jesus, who is gone before us to that happy place; and there we shall see the glory of the high God. We cannot see him here, but we will see him there. We must be now on earth, but we will often think on heaven. The happy land is our home; we are to be here but for a little while, and there forever, even for eternal ages.

HOW TO CHECK THE METHODISTS.

Extracted from the Rev. Mr. Simpson's Plea for Religion, where
he mentions it as an

ANECDOTE OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD,

When a certain bishop was complaining to the king of Whitefield's great and eccentric labours, and advising with him what steps were best to be taken to put a stop to his preaching, his majesty replied, "My Lord, I can see no other way but for us to make a bishop of him. This will stand a good chance of stopping his wild career." If this is the recipe for curing a Clergyman of an excess of public preaching, the following prescription, given by a valuable author about thirty years ago, would have no little effect in preventing the growth and increase of Methodism.—"Let the clergy live more holily, pray more fervently, preach more heavenly, and labour more diligently, than the Methodist ministers: then will christians flock to the churches to hear us, as they now flock to the meetings to hear them"

ANSWER TO PRAYER.

I felt that my prayer was heard; peace descended upon me like the dew upon the night; the day star began gradually to dawn to my soul: and the dark kingdom of satan gave way before the (bright) kingdom of the son of light and love.

GRACE.

GRACE doth correct, but not destroy. Grace strengthens, but not compels. Grace makes men able to chuse good, but not unable to refuse it. For, if it were not so, man would not be a voluntary, but a necessary agent: and when we take from man the qualities peculiar to him, as man, we make him unfit to be an object of rewards and punishments.

THE MINISTER'S PRAYER-BOOK.

A Clergyman of an independant congregation, after many years labour among his people, was supposed by some of his members very much to decline in his vivacity and usefulness; accordingly, two of the deacons waited on him and exhibited their complaint. The minister received them with much affection, and assured them that he was equally sensible of his languor and little success, and that the *cause* had given him very great uneasiness. The deacons wished, that if the minister was sufficiently free, he would name what he thought was the cause. Without hesitation the minister replied, "THE LOSS OF MY PRAYER-BOOK." "Your prayer-book!" replied the senior deacon with surprise. "I never knew you used one!" "Yes," replied the minister, "I have enjoyed the benefit of one for many years till very lately, and I attribute my ill success to the loss of it: *the prayer of my people was my prayer-book*, and it has given me great grief that they have laid it aside. Now brethren, if you will return to my people and procure me the use of my prayer-book again, I doubt not but that I shall preach much better, and you will hear more profitably." The deacons, conscious of their neglect, thanked the minister for his reproof, and wished him good morning.

THOUGHTS.

THERE are many who talk much of Religion, are continually disputing about it, and even profess themselves to be Christians, but follow them in their families and in their occupations and you would suppose they knew nothing of it. Such are a reproach to a nation and to Christianity, and are stumbling blocks to many.

IT is as natural for one that is born again to fall a praying, as for a new-born babe to fall a crying.

Poetry.

SONNET TO GOD.

ARISE, my soul, and spread thy eager wings,
To heav'n fly, and there with angels join,
To celebrate the holy King of kings,
The God of gods, in harmony divine.

'Tis he from whom all ruling virtue springs;
In him all heav'nly qualities combine;
He to our wounding griefs soft comfort brings,
And cheers our souls with gifts from wisdom's mine.

Eternal! all Justice, Bounty, Love!
Ador'd beneath, belov'd and fear'd above!
Oh! let thy angels round my steps attend;
My inmost thoughts let reason govern still,
Thy fortitude on all my actions send,
And teach me to perform thy sacred will.

PRAYER.

FIRM Hope and holy Confidence, descend
On praying souls; their blessed work attend.
Prayer soars aloft, with wide-extended wing,
Swift on commission to the heavenly King:
Beyond the haunts of impious men it flies,
To bring down blessings from the distant skies;
It fans the latent spark of heavenly fire,
Nor rests till it obtains our best desire.

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